

## Hamline University DigitalCommons@Hamline

---

School of Education Student Capstone Theses and  
Dissertations

School of Education

---

Fall 12-15-2015

# Elementary School Teacher Inspiration in Lifelong Musicianship

Austin John Wellman

Hamline University, [awellman01@hamline.edu](mailto:awellman01@hamline.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse\\_all](https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_all)



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Wellman, Austin John, "Elementary School Teacher Inspiration in Lifelong Musicianship" (2015). *School of Education Student Capstone Theses and Dissertations*. 287.

[https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse\\_all/287](https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_all/287)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Education at DigitalCommons@Hamline. It has been accepted for inclusion in School of Education Student Capstone Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Hamline. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@hamline.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@hamline.edu), [lterveer01@hamline.edu](mailto:lterveer01@hamline.edu).

# ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER INSPIRATION IN LIFELONG MUSICIANSHIP

Austin John Wellman

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Arts in Teaching.

Hamline University

St. Paul, Minnesota

December 2015

Advisor: Deb Sheffer

Secondary Advisor: Nick Antolini

Peer Advisor: Annemarie Peterson

## ABSTRACT

Wellman, A. Elementary School Teacher Inspiration in Lifelong Musicianship (2015)

This study gathers the stories of musician teachers, asking how teacher avocations in music might impact the students in the classroom. This work begins by telling the music and teaching story of the author. Topics related to music are explored in the literature review, including music as an avocation, educational research surrounding music, and finally music as a possible sense of community. Six teachers are observed and interviewed, three of whom are music teachers, and all of whom are at minimum musicians by hobby. Three notable themes are found common to all teachers participating in the study. First, all participants play recordings or live music in their classrooms. Next, an influential adult motivated each teacher, as a child, to learn or maintain an instrument. Last, each participant was impacted by parental influence, some positively and some negatively. Meaning for the classroom teacher is drawn from these themes. Future research might include a longitudinal study of students who are exposed to music in school by music and non-music teachers. (169 words)

To my family and friends for their continued love, guidance, and support throughout this project. To my advisers, who have continued with me on this writing journey for a number of years. Thank you to every band and choir director, for instilling confidence in me through music experiences.

“If you want to be great, surround yourself with great people. Leaders don't always create greatness, they set the conditions so that others can.”

-Jerry Luckhardt

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to my school administrators in Kuwait and Shanghai for allowing me to bring music into our school world.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction.....	8
Childhood Music Experiences .....	8
University Study .....	10
Becoming a Teacher .....	13
Music in My Teaching Practice .....	16
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review.....	25
Introduction .....	25
Avocations for Teachers and Students .....	25
Music in the School .....	27
Music as Community .....	38
CHAPTER THREE: Methodology .....	42
Introduction .....	42
Research Plan and Rationale .....	42
Setting and Participants .....	44
Research Instruments .....	46
Data Analysis Techniques .....	46

CHAPTER FOUR: Results .....	50
Overview .....	50
Description of Data Analysis Techniques .....	50
Data Collected .....	51
Interpretation of Data .....	65
Connection of Themes to Literature .....	65
CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion .....	68
Implications and Limitations .....	68
Future Projects .....	69
Growth of the Author .....	69
APPENDIX .....	72
REFERENCES .....	77



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Introduction**

Music creates a strong community. Communities formed around music come in a variety of forms, but for many students, music is delivered by orchestra, band, and choral instruction during the school day. Some students may also form music friendships through extra-curricular bands or religious organizations. However, in mainstream schools, most music exposure is through structured academic coursework, particularly as an elective in the middle and upper grades. How do teachers bring various forms of music into their practice when they have a personal avocation in music? This work tells my music story, my teaching story, and aims to make music come alive for the classroom teacher.

### **Childhood Music Experiences**

As a shy student, I experienced school as a big place with lots of strangers, especially once I moved out of the small, parochial, rural elementary school I attended. I often felt misunderstood and isolated on my journey through school as a young student. Approaching fifth grade, I saw an outlet through the new opportunity of playing the trombone in a concert band. Soon, I took home a trombone and began to feel more connected to school. I was part of a community and suddenly felt that me, the goofy weird kid, could fit in at school. The group of band students in my community endured the middle school experience together and somehow survived all the way to high school.

One lazy summer night middle school night, after the sun had set and my

household had fallen asleep, I had a dream about a parade passing by my rural Minnesota home. Specifically, I recall a large marching band passing through Vermillion Township. Of course, as rural farm-dwellers, we never once saw a parade move past our home, as my parents lived on a gravel road at least three miles from any pavement. I remember, in the dream, looking out the window of my bedroom onto the marching band, feeling that I had to join. I saw the dream as a sign and knew that marching band was the place for me. If the glasses, nose bleeds, and the goofy giggle fit, I would soon be in the right place! Marching band began taking priority over my track and field practices that rainy spring. Marching band felt like home.

Finally, there was a place in my world where I felt on par with the students around me. Everyone within marching distance was a little bit goofy and I could act like myself as an equally kooky peer. Marching band led to many other experiences in high school. In addition to this roll-stepping society, I also joined pep band, concert band, jazz ensemble, musical orchestras, and instrumental solo contests. If I was not working at my appliance retail job or studying in another academic class, I was either playing my trombone or hanging out with my instrumentalist friends.

As a part of these music ensembles, my friendships deepened and we had a strong sense of ownership over our experience. If a rehearsal did not go well, invested members of the ensembles would spend the day discussing what we could do better, or if we measured up to previous generations of the ensemble. I remember crying on stage as we performed a piece of music during my final senior-year concert. There was not a dry eye on stage by the time the standing ovation came around. We felt like part of us was dying

when we graduated from all of the incredible music experiences offered at our school. We did not have this connection from math class, history, or personal finance class, but from school-based music experiences. My best life-long friends are from these ensembles, and I consider these people my extended “chosen” family. While I felt like the world was falling apart upon graduation, I moved on and away for college.

### **University Study**

Music, of course, had to be a part of my college experience. Most of my meaningful relationships that formed during my high school years stemmed from these music ensembles. We spent so much time together, poured out our souls on a daily basis through musical interpretation, and lived fairly parallel lives. I felt that I needed a strong music experience to replace what had gone missing after high school. I attended the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities as a Golden Gopher and joined the Minnesota Marching Band. I rehearsed with the Pride of Minnesota four to six times each week; my band life quickly stepped up a notch.

Life did go on, and all was good with new band friends. I moved to college two weeks early for band, spending 12 hours per day rehearsing with the band those first few weeks. After just a few weeks, I had already spent hundreds of hours with my new music family and had formed new, fresh music bonds. I continued to experience the soaring highs and goose bump moments that come with performing instrumentally in a group setting. This time, we performed in front of thousands of people each week at Big Ten football games. I was in love with the experience, and grew even more passionate for my work in music at the University of Minnesota.

My most meaningful educational experiences at this point in life had been in music. One might believe that it is only natural that a musician such as me becomes a music teacher, right?

Wrong. I screeched my music brakes to a slamming halt. Since I spent all of my spare time through high school and college in a music setting, I thought I would try to become a band director or music teacher. Through this experience, I learned two very clear understandings about myself. First, I learned that while I love playing my trombone as a hobby, trombone needed to stay a hobby. During sophomore year, I dedicated myself to becoming a music teacher, which meant long days and nights, surrounding myself with every aspect of the music and trombone world. There were countless days and nights when I would journey to the basement practice rooms of a 1980s music building at the University of Minnesota, filled with fluorescent lighting, and emerge wondering how I had spent the entire afternoon yelling at my trombone. People do yell and grow upset at their instruments when they spend an extravagant amount of time playing an instrument. Some people name their instruments and even form human-like emotions toward their instrument. Other days, I would enter into that same 1980s basement, this time from the music library, waking from my post-opera listening session nap. I was not very excited about spending time studying music. Something seemed wrong.

I did not have the same zeal and passion as my colleagues who were studying to be professional musicians or music teachers. Many of my classmates loved to spend days alone with their instruments, and they loved to listen to and dissect opera (I do appreciate opera, just for the record). The music world seemed fully-engaging for my colleagues. I

felt different. The career choice seemed to be a poor fit. I was trying to make a career out of my hobby. Though I was slowly realizing that I was not meant to teach music, some key discoveries came about along the way.

As part of this music education experience, I was able to spend a considerable amount of time in the k-12 school system. My music education courses sent me into local schools for required observations of all grade levels. My time in the school of music taught me that I really enjoyed being in the classroom with students. I loved the kids and really enjoyed forming relationships with everyone. Sure, I was scared to death any time I was made the officiator of a classroom, as I had really never spent much time working with younger people, even babysitting. I decided to make a change in my career-seeking path. However, after finally switching gears and enrolling in an elementary education course, the professor said I was a natural elementary school teacher. How could she say that I would be a natural elementary school teacher? This surprising news really came out of nowhere.

Long before I even picked up a trombone and formed all of these deep connections to a music program, I was going to be an architect. To clarify this timeline, as a young boy, I was going to be an architect. Then, sophomore year, I was going to be a music teacher. By junior year of college, I switched paths again and decided to be an elementary school teacher.

While I was having incredible social and musical experiences in my high school and college ensembles, the more individual, removed and private version of myself would sit at home and draw buildings. I would imagine grand mansions, draw entire sets

of plans, and dream of these structures being built. I knew that I would be a famous architect someday. How could I not? Everyone professed to me the gift I was given, and expectations were set. I began at the University as an architecture student, concurrent with the entire marching band experience. I was finally able to explore my gift and my life-long passion.

I hated architecture classes. We rarely talked about buildings, and hardly ever talked about houses, my true passion. Older students and I talked, roommates and I talked, my family and friends and I talked many times, and after many sleepless nights, I was no longer going to be an architect. I was feeling quite lost and felt as if my identity was on the rocks each time I seriously reconsidered my career path.

Do you remember that professor who told me to be an elementary school teacher? I thought I might give it a try. The more I observed, taught, and spent time with the kids, the more I loved the idea of being another sort of teacher, other than a music teacher. I was certainly beginning to like the idea of playing my trombone just for fun and removing the financial association. In the end, I got a bit nervous about becoming an elementary school teacher while I was in college, and decided to earn a communication studies degree instead. After all, I liked learning about people and their interactions. I thought I could figure out the career that matches my academic path later.

### **Becoming a Teacher**

It is funny today to look back on my confused, dizzying college career. My former roommates still tease me about how many times I switched my major or plan each semester, or sometimes each week or even day. I powered my way through school and

decided to go to graduate school to study elementary education. Concurrently, I worked at a Minnesota charter school as an educational assistant, assisting students with high functioning autism. I have since taught second grade in Kuwait at an international school for three years. After Kuwait, I moved to Shanghai, China to teach fourth grade at another international school. My career is beginning to gel, and the music component of my life is completely an avocation.

One of my roles in education was helping students with autism as an educational assistant. Helping manage and facilitate discussion in our classroom was a great opportunity to integrate my personal passions into the school day. It was my job to help calm and regulate the students' bodies and minds. At the very least, I could set the students up for success by preparing their environment to be extremely calm and predictable. For instance, I often took out my iPad and began playing recordings of Gershwin melodies, played by trombones, of course. The music is soft, subtle, and draws the attention of the students into a calm place. Some began recognizing the music during work time and began to hum along. Occasionally, a student grew upset from the music and would request to have it turned off. More often than not, though, students were calmed or energized by the music.

On Fridays, our students with Asperger's (high functioning autism) had a harder time preparing for the unexpected events of the coming weekend. Oftentimes, students were arranged to visit grandparents' homes, restaurants, and stores with many unregimented social situations with their families. The students were often anxious and uneasy leading up to the weekends. Luckily, in my ever-energetic staff meetings, one of

the occupational therapists introduced freeze dancing as an option for our sensory breaks during the 80 minute class block. Imagine musical chairs, but instead of running around chairs to music, we danced, and instead of quickly sitting in a chair when the music stops, everyone froze. Music played, everyone danced. Music paused, everyone froze. I had a bit too much fun freezing as one of my colleagues paused the music during the staff meeting (imagine laughing, a red face, and maybe a bit of convulsing from excitement), so I decided to bring the freeze dance into our foundations level science class. The students loved it! Fridays were now humbly named by the students “Freeze Dance Friday”, and students were able to choose the music, as long as I had time to preview the lyrics. Using fast-moving music and an element of surprise (as the students would have to suddenly freeze), we were able to allow students to be a little crazy in a controlled way. At this point in my career, I was playing with music at school and taking mental notes of the effects it had on the students' experience. I loved that I had a strong connection to and knowledge about music.

After a few years of floating around within the education world, I became licensed in K-6 elementary education. An international school in Kuwait hired me to teach second grade for the fall of 2012 after attending an international teaching fair in Iowa. On a Saturday night at 6:00pm, I was offered a contract for two years in Kuwait. At 11:00am on the following morning, I signed my contract and started planning my move to Kuwait. Ever since, I have been living the international teacher lifestyle as a young and eager teacher.



### **Music in My Teaching Practice**

Music in Kuwait is a very touchy topic. There are some members of the Islamic community in Kuwait who believe that music should not be allowed in the schools. My administration in Kuwait was more than generous in allowing me to integrate music into the learning environment. Not only did I spend more time working as a teacher than as an educational assistant, but I also began to bring more of myself, the musician, into my practice as a teacher.

As part of a school-wide experience, it was suggested by the principal to create a lively environment for music-making during school assemblies. With the arrival of new middle and high school band directors, it was decided that we form a new staff and student jazz/rock ensemble. The elementary school principal heard that this group had formed, and instantly invited the jazz ensemble into the first all-school assembly hosted by the elementary leadership team. High-achieving high school brass players received invitations from the band director to play with the ensemble for a weekly practice and school performances. In addition, other staff at school who play instruments were invited to join the band, beefing up the regular 10-piece ensemble.

The first performance of the school jazz/rock band was a success. Many of the student members had never played jazz or rock music before and many of our students had never heard live music of this type. For some of the staff, it was their first time in many years playing in an ensemble. With only two rehearsals prior to the performance, the group managed to entertain over 1,000 elementary students and 130 staff/faculty in the school auditorium. Although we had a variety of nations represented at the school, the

students in Kuwait were rarely exposed to live music, never mind the American tradition of jazz/rock. For a week, staff were approached by students saying “I saw you playing your instrument at the assembly.” The leader of the jazz ensemble received many invitations to play at future events and an open invitation to play at future elementary assemblies.

A few weeks later, we were asked to play at a high school assembly. The high school population is much smaller than the elementary population in our school. Students in the high school did not receive the band quite as nicely as the elementary students, but teachers sent many positive comments to the director and greatly appreciated the live music presence in the school. It seemed that the high school students were a bit more self-aware, unwilling to dance and move in front of their peers.

The group of staff involved in the jazz/rock group came together to discuss our future as musicians in the school. The requests for us to play at events became a bit overwhelming, as any time a whole-school celebration was in the works, the band was encouraged to play. While this sounds great and all, the busy day-to-day life as a teacher made performing during the school day difficult. Members of the group agreed that once per month would be plenty for performing inside the school. The elementary principal may have been the biggest fan of the band, and even offered substitute teacher coverage whenever the band performs within the school day. The musicians of the band were well-supported and well-received by the administration and staff at the school. Over the summer, our eager elementary principal began to teach himself how to play drum set and even joined in the music-making the following year. Music became part of the culture of

the school, fostering collegial relationships through teacher avocations.

Music was not only part of the faculty experience, but infused the school in other ways too. Students began arriving at school at 7:15am (sometimes earlier), and were not allowed inside the building until 7:40am, at which point teachers escorted everyone inside. The school playground was stark at best, lacking slides, swings, or any real play equipment at all. Students were creative during recess times and before school, often racing or playing tag to pass the time and emit energy. We wanted to see what might happen if we introduced music to the morning playground experience.

The morning playground seemed to be a perfect trial space for music experimentation. In early December of 2013, several of the music-minded teachers in the elementary school got together and decided to try amplifying recorded music on the first and second grade playground. After the elementary principal approved the request to play music, the affected staff were spoken to and also had to give their approvals before the project could begin. All first and second grade teachers, including Arabic staff and teaching assistants approved the experiment with a smile.

Since the school was in Kuwait, all music integration had to be done very cautiously. Kuwait is a country that is guided and governed by Islam. Part of the Islamic community is very much against music, particularly in schools, exposing children to music. The school involved in this study is a more liberal-minded school as music is taught and embraced by the faculty. Much of the Islamic faculty also embrace music and understand its role in society and at school. The principal made it clear to avoid music with lyrics, just to be safe about messages being portrayed to such a large group of

students on this elementary playground, numbered at 270 or more at any given time.

We proceeded with our music trial, and many of the teachers asked the students about their experiences. The teachers began to ask students what they noticed. Some students enjoyed the new environment, while others seemed concerned with the situation and the change in their environment. I attempted to play rock, jazz, and classical instrumental music on different days.

Staff gathered around this first morning of music, casually discussing the potential impact that the music would make on the playground that morning. Speculations included everything from a calmer playground environment with fewer fights, to a more positive faculty. The mood was light as the teachers escorted their students into the school. A parent was noted to be lingering on the playground for the first time this morning, seeming concerned about what was going on with the music. The same mother lurking on the playground was seen meeting in the elementary school office that morning, complaining about how the teachers are forcing the students to listen to music.

Later that week, the Arabic language staff approached the teacher DJs asking for music to be played on a special day at school: Arabic Day. Arabic Day is an initiative of the Kuwaiti ministry of education to promote the gulf dialect of the Arabic language. Two young, energized teachers (of Lebanese descent) organized the music to be broadcasted across the playground. Lebanese music was played in Arabic, with lyrics. They stood nearby as to keep the music going, ensuring that the words were appropriate for the students. Approximately five minutes prior to the start of school, the principal approached the DJ area, slightly disgruntled. He explained that the music had to fade out and that he

would explain later.

The same mother who was seen lingering on the playground during the music mornings gathered a few other conservative-minded families and created a stir amongst the administration. She complained of students dancing and being forced to hear the music. The principal fired back by explaining that the school is an international school and that music is part of the curriculum and the school day. She also explained that even though the school is international in nature, this is not North America and that the staff should respect the religious background and values of the families.

The principal honored the mother's request for the time being, until the owner of the school returned from her vacation abroad. A planned live instrumental performance, scheduled the day prior to winter/Christmas break, was also cancelled as to protect the school. For a short while, the music was silenced. The principal explained that the ownership (of Lebanese descent) values music, making the school a special place in Kuwait. Many institutions around the nation do not even teach music classes, never mind allow music to be played or sung during the day. The music would be back shortly, the principal insisted, and will be a part of the weekly program before school. No major meetings occurred, but the music broadcasting team at school decided to make a bold decision, bringing the music back slowly and softly.

It was suggested that due to the restrictive nature of music in the region and Kuwait, that the school could host a music-themed learning community. The school community was now talking about music implementation in our classrooms. Teachers wanted to use music, but questioned what might have been right or wrong in the eyes of

Kuwait. After the band took off and music being played on the playground, teachers started to question their own use of music in their school days. Approximately 15 teachers and teaching assistants in the elementary school bonded together to form a professional learning community surrounding the topic of music. Half of the group is European and North American, while the other half comes from the Middle East. All licensed teachers are North American, while the teaching assistants are European or Middle Eastern. Professional Learning Communities are required by the school leadership, though staff members have a choice about the topic that they are interested in studying.

The school left much of the direction of the Professional Learning Community open to the staff involved in the group. At the first meeting, many group members shared their ideas about what had worked in the classroom in the past. The two elementary music teachers were present at the meeting and part of the group. Though potentially unrelated, many of the Arab staff seemed intimidated by the music teachers and other musicians in the room. Most people shared a song or two, played the music if it was available, and shared his/her background in music. The members usually had a week's notice to prepare for the next meeting, though many members only completed tasks during the meeting times.

The group began to take on some long-term projects to help improve the music situation at the school. One problem that many staff members isolated was the ministry of education's restriction on music. Kuwait is governed by a strong religious moral guidance that watches over and protects the citizens and residents from anything that might cause

harm to the character of these people. Perhaps a strong position to take in the west, Kuwait is like most Arab countries in this protective capacity. Music, to some in the Arab world can be seen as “haram” or forbidden. While most western members of the school community seem to disagree with this idea, some of the families at the school follow these moral principles.

Schools in Kuwait are supposed to have all music approved by the Ministry of Education prior to exposing the music to children in the classroom. Many schools in Kuwait, both public and private, do not allow music at all, though our particular school supports the arts and music programs. If a song, movie, book, music video, or performance piece are to be forced by the teacher upon the students, it must be approved formally by the Ministry of Education. Teachers often found that items sent into the ministry of education took a long time, or sometimes were not returned at all. Books, if showing any forbidden pictures or words, were blacked out, whited out, or glued together, making images seen as forbidden disappear. These requested classroom resources were approved or forbidden for teacher use. Some teachers and departments maintain a record of the approved items for others to see, but nowhere is there a document that shares what is “allowed” and “forbidden” by the government. Random checks were made to observe in the school by the Ministry of Education, so teachers were at-risk if they chose to play music that was not approved by the Ministry of Education.

### **Presenting the Study**

I am so grateful for my own experiences in classroom music, as it has greatly sculpted my journey as a student, friend, and well-balanced adult. After a few discussions

with my choir and band mates, whom I greatly trust, a few ideas have arisen. A very experienced choral director shared with me her frustration and concern for the lack of music in lessons. She challenged me to ask questions like “are teachers singing with their students?” Or, “are the students creating music in line with subject matter?” She says that the environmental effect greatly impacts our classrooms when we play artists like Mozart, though she encourages me to take this work to a deeper level. Anyone can play music for his or her students, but it takes a great teacher to integrate music into the lesson, or better yet, watch students take independent action involving music.

Music drove me to be engaged in school, beginning late in elementary school. Music was my glue to school. Without music in my experience, my sense of community, identity, and belonging would have felt a lot different. My path of self-discovery was through the conduit of music, my music family, and under the formation of the teachers who led these programs. Music is my foundation.

With this intense hold over me, I want to collect stories of educators who have had similar music experiences and share them with current teachers and education professionals. I want to know if teachers are creating these environments in their classrooms and if they continue to experience a zeal for music as an avocation. As an adult, I continue to play in wind ensembles and sing in vocal ensembles regularly, wherever I end up living. Music has been a central part of my life through school and beyond, stretching into adulthood. My curiosity drives me to look into this experience in adulthood and where it stems from as a child both in and out of school. How do teachers bring various forms of music into their practice when they have a personal avocation in



music? In chapter two, we explore an array of research and writing surrounding music as it connects to schools, music communities, and music as an avocation.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **Literature Review**

#### **Introduction**

In this work, quality music experiences are assumed to be valued from a young age until late in life. How do teachers bring various forms of music into their practice when they have a personal avocation in music? In this chapter, I explored literature surrounding music, classrooms, and music communities. This literature review is broken into multiple parts, as to cover the wide array of topics pertaining to musicianship as it relates to the teacher. First, I discussed teacher avocations as they pertain to the classroom. Next, I organized a variety of research surrounding music and learning. Lastly, I will look at music as an agent of community.

#### **Avocations for Teachers and Students**

Werner (2002) shared thoughts about teachers who bring their avocations into the classroom as part of their teaching passion. He commented that these educators use their passions to influence their students and give teachers an option for pursuing an avocation outside of paid work. Werner also discussed other ideas about the productive quality of hobbies and how these hobbies can bring a productive competence to leisure time. He

stated that students can learn from teachers who have a passion for hobbies and leisure activities. Werner provided examples of teachers who then bring their avocations into the classroom to motivate students and charge a classroom with life. One teacher, in his work, brought a collection of valuable athletics equipment into the classroom to help ignite a passion in the students. Werner discussed how another teacher collects antique tools and shares early American customs with his class.

Another example of research pertaining to teacher avocations is the work of Cox et. al (1990). Cox et. al collected their first-hand experiences as teachers into a story, sharing examples of their meaningful experiences outside of school. They brought these stories to life in their own classrooms and connect on a different level with their students. Cox et. al discussed one teacher who speaks of her experience on the road as a carny over a summer. They discussed how she connects in a deep way with her low-income students when returning to the classroom, as many have come from backgrounds similar to her summer colleagues who are carnies. Another teacher, in the work of Cox et. al shared a story of picking up a flute for the first time in 25 years and begins to taking lessons from a professional. First, feeling guilty for dedicating so much time to a hobby, this teacher soon learns that her hobby enhances her understanding of student learning and even helps relax her at the end of a wild day, making her a stronger teacher. The authors shared other hobbies, from furniture restoration to swimming and highlights the positive impact they make in their students' lens on life, all in a non-typical academic manner. Though light in manner, this first section brought along the perspective of teachers who have brought outside passions into their classrooms. Next, a variety of music studies are discussed as

they pertain to learning and school.

### **Music in the School**

The following ideas came from a variety of music studies, mostly pertaining to music at it can affect students in a learning environment. My work originally aimed to focus on how music can be an environmental asset to the elementary school classroom. I originally imagined adding to the research conversation around music as a background element. Imagine the classroom that plays soothing and calming background music. Songs are sung during transitions (for example, the clean up song), singing occurs during transitions, and occasionally music is used to teach a new idea through memorization. These ideas are great, as these techniques motivate students in new ways and may also ignite alternate pathways in the brain, according to teacher discussions I have had over the years as an educator.

Bresler (1994) said that music should be more than a transition piece. She asked what classroom teachers are able to accomplish if given the task of being the sole music instructor in a child's life. She spoke of many music classrooms disappearing in schools, forcing untrained teachers to teach music.

Bresler's (1994) collection of case studies pushed forth documentation of what happened musically in three Chicago schools. In Bresler's work, teachers in visited schools commented on how core academics (reading, writing, and math) often take priority in the classroom, pushing music to the wayside. Teachers, according to Bresler, also commented on the pressure to focus on math and reading by administration and parents. She spoke again as music as less of a priority and of music as a tertiary study.

Bresler discussed how schools aim to focus on math and reading as to improve test scores, and in some schools, staff is rewarded when students do well on tests. Her argument is that teachers thus wanted to spend more time on math and reading, as they were rewarded for this work, not on the crucial work as a music educator. The author argued through Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences that music is essential for creative development and way of viewing the world. Gardner's theory states that students learn through varying modalities (through music, through movement, etc.). Bresler discussed how creative thinking and perspective are not usually tested in a school community, reducing the sense of urgency to teach music. Bresler (2005), in a more recent commentary, discussed once again this problem of music going to the back burner in American classrooms.

Bresler (2005) referred to music in a way that is subservient to the other academic areas, as an instructional need to reinforce our math, reading, writing, or other areas of education. Bresler discussed how at one point in time, music was one of the seven liberal arts and was in itself an academic discipline in our educational system. According to Bresler, teachers believed that they do not personally have the experience base to properly teach music. She discusses music becoming the mental recess from other areas of work in the classroom, when she believed that so much more could be accomplished through music. Bresler said that while music as a background or transitional element of the classroom can be effective, the presence of music as a core subject should also be considered. She claimed that teachers were nervous about their expertise in the subject of music.

I believe that teachers are feeling the burden of academic pressure and many seem to know that music can be an important building block of our human development.

Through my years of teaching and performing as a musician, I believe that teachers are not in the wrong when they sneak in art and music projects between other large, school mandated lessons, according to many of the studies discussed by Bresler (1994).

Incorporating greater music and arts instruction does have an impact, in my opinion.

The conversation around achievement begins with research related to students in the schools with music as a component of the day-to-day learning experience, based on my time as a teacher. I have found that a surprising array of research exists as to how students can achieve at higher rates with music in their day, based on the performance of standardized testing results. While many questions are still out there on the specifics, many of the following studies, such as Catterall et. al (1999) and Fisk (1999), indicated that engagement in a music program does indeed help students with academic success. These studies said that just having particular types of music present in the classroom also helps students perform at a high rate, though fully engaging students, possibly through music, is ultimately key in student success.

Catterall, Chapleau, and Iwanaga (1999) believed that music has an effect on our students, particularly students who are of low socio-economic status. As referred to in correlation with the work of Fiske (1999), Catterall et. al. indicated that there is an impact made when students are able to become engaged in a variety of activities in the music and the arts in a school. Catterall et. al. said that students are even benefitting, however in varied ways, when participating in only one music or theater activity at their schools,

based on the 1997-1998 study. Catterall et. al.'s work focuses mainly on students achievement in the upper grades (specifically 8th, 10th and 12th), though the authors hinted at the importance and connection to math education in the lower grades. Catterall et al also referred to (as cited in Bahna-James (1991)) more information on mathematics related to music and its effect on achievement.

Catterall, Chapleau, and Iwanaga (1999) believed that when students are engaged, that they will perform better in school. I argue that this is congruent with other areas of life. Catterall et. al continued, stating that adults can lead a happier and more successful life when engaged in an activity, church or organization with which they are proud and feel a part of a community. I believe that students can feel the same joy when fully engaged in their school community, as I feel happier when engaged in my own community music organizations.

Catterall, Chapleau and Iwanaga (1999) suggested that all areas of study in school have inherent forms of art built in to the subject area. Math and music, they suggest, particularly can coexist without too much of a stretch in conceptual framework. Catterall et. al. took time and energy to determine that students do not need to see the direct correlation between music and math for an effect to be positive. Though, Catterall et. al. pointed out that there is really only a connection between music theory and mathematics. In this correlation, the authors state that the rhythms, frequencies of pitches, lengths of notes, and so forth connect the fields. I personally appreciate this connection.

Former colleagues have argued that music is deeply connected and essential to literacy development, particularly reading skills. Hansen and Bernstorf (2002) provided

examples through the topics in literacy education in areas such as phonological skills, like learning rhyming patterns and rhyming replacement words. They continued, stating that the link between decoding similar spelling patterns between words and decoding music symbols presents reinforcement opportunities. The authors also noted similarities in fluency for reading, writing, and the fluency of reading and writing music. Hansen and Bernstorff, at the time of this article, agreed that there is much more research to do on music, the brain, and academic benefits. They also mention that when positive correlations emerge in academia, that music instructors are rarely surprised by the outcome of the studies.

In my experience, I believe that Music has an artistic engagement that mathematics does not. Catterall, Chapleau and Iwanaga (1999) asserted that there is little in mathematics that we can do to create that intense emotional pull that is a part of listening to music. Students within the study claimed to be involved with music because of the emotional draw, according to Catterall et. al. However, they found that students seem to benefit in mathematics from the study of music (in most math areas, according to this research). Comments from student surveys in their study implied that students are appalled by the notion that there is a connection between math and music, as studies were conducted at a music/arts centered school. I connected with these students, thinking back to my own school experience. I did not want anyone invading our special music community, solidified by our common bond of music.

When considering my current research, there were many reasonable connections to be made between music and mathematics. Learning music's practical theory leads to



academic gain in math, in considering my own music journey. The previous conversation regarding school pressure can again be addressed here. I believe, in my experience as a teacher, that teachers can benefit from non-musical academic gain from music participation. Music pulls people in at a deep, engaging level, based on my time in large ensembles, either by emotional pull or community pull. In considering Catterall, Chapleau and Iwanaga (1999) and my own music journey, I believe that the music ensemble experience brings the people in, while accidentally, in a way, increasing test scores as a beautiful side effect, which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

Southgate and Roscigno (2009) commented on the current work done in academia regarding music and its impact on the success of students. The authors state that educators must go deeper in their work with music, deeper than playing music to incite particular behavior from the students. Along with Bahna-James (1991), Southgate and Roscigno pushed for the use of music in mathematics as well as reading programs in the classroom. While the entire study and conversation raised by Southgate and Roscigno is powerful, this work focuses on another wondering I have. If teachers have had powerful music experiences, is this coming into the classroom? Is this somehow helping the students? Southgate and Roscigno found that music involvement does positively impact students' success across the board, but I wonder if this is happening in general education classrooms too. Southgate and Roscigno also found that lower socio-economic classes may correlate to lower music achievement.

In the education world, there is a lot of buzz around music and the outcome on our brain development as children, based on my time in courses with teachers and while

working in a number of schools. In a recent study by Schellenberg (2004), music as a supposed method of increasing the IQ level of students is tested. The findings by Schellenberg told us that extra-curricular music class can increase the IQ level of 6-year old students through group piano lessons. The study concurrently found that an extra-curricular drama class can increase the social skills of 6-year old students. Schellenberg stated that depending on the type of art extra-curricular activity that a student can be involved with, the academic or social outcome may also change.

Another study I found regarding academic intelligence looked at mathematical competence as a result of music training. Cheek and Smith (1999) learned that students who have studied for at least two years on the keyboard/piano have higher test scores than the students who did not study the keyboard/piano. Cheek and Smith questioned whether socioeconomic status of the families who can afford piano lessons impact the mathematics scores in this study, with accessibility to other resources.

Based on my years in the classroom, many elementary classrooms designate a quiet time. I also participate in this practice, calling my after-recess block “chill time” where students have 10-15 minutes to read, write, draw, practice free math, or complete an independent project. During this quiet time, I often play some sort of soothing or relaxing music, as to relax my students after a wild recess, usually involving some heated soccer match. This practice in my classroom brings about discussion on the work of Jenkins (2001).

According to Jenkins (2001), the Mozart Effect stated that when listening to music, students’ brains are more alert and able to perform academic tasks at a more

successful rate. Jenkins' research is originally based off of work done in the 1990's with college students, where some were asked to listen to Mozart and others were asked to listen to relaxation tapes (Rauscher, 1993). The students were then assessed in intelligence after listening to the varying music types. According to Rauscher (1993), those who listened to Mozart were able to outperform the students who listened to the relaxation tapes on spatial-temporal tasks. While the validity of this work is often questioned by teachers, academics such as Jenkins question the validity of the work. Rauscher and Shaw (1998) suggest that music listening only affects tasks identified as spatial-temporal. So, listening to music for a short period of time prior to the task, students may be able to perform spatial-temporal-related tasks to a higher degree of effectiveness, according to Rauscher and Shaw.

Rauscher, Shaw, and Ky (1993) claimed that listening to Mozart's music for a short length of time would improve spatial task awareness and ability. This study was highly talked about in the school community, per my experience as a classroom teacher. Jenkins (2001) noted that since Rauscher's (1993) study, music enlivens parts of the brain, as different tasks within music alert different areas of the human brain. Jenkins discussed that for instance, the left hemisphere of the brain may account for rhythm, while melody is accounted for in the right hemisphere of the brain. Jenkins then argued that spatial reasoning skills are heightened as music listening uses the same areas of the brain.

So, what does this all mean? Continuing in the discussion that Jenkins (2001) and Rauscher et. al (1993) held, Hetland (2000) confirmed that music does have an effect on

very particular types of spatial tasks. Hetland also suggested that the music is not limited to just Mozart, but any music that is stimulating can also improve the spatial tasks that Mozart's music is thought to improve. Hetland continued, saying that music as a background feature or transition cue in a classroom could have a positive effect on spatial-temporal tasks. When a teacher wants to improve those spatial skills, Hetland suggested to play Mozart or similar music a few minutes prior to the task.

**Gardner's Theory** Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences tied in nicely with this conversation on music integration into the classroom. Gardner's (1985) original theory claimed that people learn in many different ways, which includes music as one of the possible learning styles. My own 4th grade teaching team took time to sort students for a mathematical engagement, based on students' learning styles. In fact, the multiple intelligences discussion has been a part of every school community I have been a part of these past six years of my career.

In a later work, Gardner (2003) spoke of his crossroads between working for educators and working for psychologists in his work on the frames of mind, tying back to his original work (1985) on the multiple intelligences. Gardner believed that schools could be structured in a manner that allow for music to be at the forefront of the educational model, as many students think in a musical or aesthetic way. Tying back to the central question, I wonder if teachers with music training are inclined to teach in a more musical manner.

Kassell (1998) referred to Gardner's early work in her own piece by stating that Gardner was troubled by the idea of placing all intelligences into one piece of curriculum.

Accomplishing a unity of learning styles is difficult, especially when performed well. Below, Kassel wrote, referring to MI as Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences.

Much of the MI [multiple intelligences] literature suggested exercises that link memorizing academic content with rhythms or simple songs. One reason this should concern teachers is the message it sends to students, administrators, and peers about the function of music; it suggests that music is simply a tool for enhancing memory (Kassel 1998, p. 30).

Kassel (1998) stated that if a teacher is not respecting the music, it should not be honored at all in the classroom. Kassel questioned the authenticity and quality of the music instruction and engagement in classrooms. This went for all of Gardner's intelligences, that teachers should honor all learning styles and students by being quality designers of education, according to Kassel. Next, I will explore brain research as it pertains to music.

**Brain Research** Blood and Zatorre (2001) use positron emission tomography, referred to as PET scans in the study, to research the impact that favorite pieces of classical music play on the brain. Blood and Zatorre watched scans brain activity as music is played. In contrast to work by Gardner (1985), this study used brain scan data to determine what exactly alerts the brain. Gardner's work informed us of how students are motivated to learn. According to Blood and Zatorre, students with eight or more years of training, selected classical pieces to play. Then, Blood and Zatorre measured what musicians call goose bump moments in music, causing high activity in selected parts of the brain. Blood and Zatorre found that this well-known music stimulates areas of the brain, in a similar manner to food and sex. Blood and Zatorre note

that food and sex are part of human survival, while music is not. Blood and Zatorre suggested that this similarity in brain activity between food, sex, and music is groundbreaking in music research and that much can be taken from this work. In addition to how music affects our minds, music can affect the classroom environments.

**Music and the Classroom Ambiance** Shih, Huang, and Chiang (2012)

questioned whether music with or without lyrics could impact productivity in the workplace. The researchers presented two identical songs to the participants during a task: one of the pieces had no lyrics and the other had lyrics. They found that participants are more productive when the music without lyrics is played in the background, suggesting that non-lyrical music helps adult workers maximize efficiency. In my own classroom, I often play soft music without lyrics to attempt to enhance the productivity of my students.

Ravaja and Kallinen (2004) asked how startling musical moments can impact attention and retention during reading. Ravaja and Kallinen presented study participants with six financial articles, and given a questionnaire to complete after reading the articles. The participants were also ranked on arousal, interest, and feelings as they listened to music. Ravaja and Kallinen used two measurement systems to quantify attention to and retention of reading material, known as the behavioral inhibition system, (BIS) and behavioral activation system, known as BAS. The results of Ravaja and Kallinen showed that some participants are more engaged in their reading when startling music is played. Ravaja and Kallinen also reported that depending on personality types, some participants were negatively impacted by the musical interruptions while reading the passages. In my

own classroom, I also find that if I startle some students with a loud noise or surprise in music, they will be more attentive.

### **Music as Community**

Vickhoff, Malmgren, Nyberg, Ekström, Engwall, and Jörnsten (2013) approached music from the physiological perspective. Vickhoff et. al study the chain of events that takes place between the heart and the brain while a group of musicians sing together. The team found that heart rates synchronize during group singing exercises. Vickhoff et. al. claimed that there has not been a lot of information on the relationship between the heart and the brain while involved in music experiences. Vickhoff et. al.'s study suggested a communal need that members fulfill through group singing, yoga, and breathing exercises. Vickhoff et. al's work began to explain how groups singing together connect on a physiological level. I wonder about the classroom impact, such as how a feeling of worth and value may be achieved through group classroom singing. Connecting to my own research question, I wonder if my own feelings of belonging stemmed from the communal music experiences. I wonder if these communal sense of belonging is being created through music routes, especially in elementary classrooms.

The music classroom, especially in the upper grade levels, tends to have a higher sense of ownership and belonging than many other areas of the school, based on my time in the music classroom as a student. Criss (2010) discussed ways a high school band or choir classroom can and sometimes do operate like a highly successful sports or business team. Criss specifically looked at the need in teenagers to belong to a community. She offered suggestions for the music classroom to operate more like an athletic team through

setting student-focused goals in a changing, living document. Criss suggested that leadership roles need to emerge in the band, stating that a successful music classroom must have clearly identified roles for the students. Criss suggested that the teacher must then take responsibility to carefully select students who can help the classroom in their own gifted ways. In the music classroom, Criss suggested that older students take attendance, sort music, lead sectionals, and even lead rehearsals to take on a role of ownership within the music community. Then, Criss stated that students walk away with a sense of pride and feel as if they are letting down the “team” when they do not do their fair share of the work. Younger students feel the peer pressure to perform, based on the older members of more senior members of the band.

Criss (2010) then suggested teachers build an identity for the music classroom. Criss offered that any opportunity for a music group to perform outside of the school venue for a new audience helps to build this identity. In addition, Criss suggested that any sort of trip or excursion can aid in building an identity through shared, common experiences. When strange or memorable things happen to the community, the group of people in that community create traditions, stories, and norms. Criss added that these team memories make the middle and high school music experience unique. Criss states that each member of the music community is able to contribute, feels part of the team, and works to protect that team under the leadership of the teacher.

Based on Criss’ (2010) research, I suggest that an elementary school classroom (non-music) teacher might introduce this music-as-team model. The students may set a goal of a music performance, particularly at the beginning of the school year. Following



Criss' model, teachers may teach a basic song, with varying parts, perhaps including percussion or other instruments. Criss noted that after several weeks of hard work, identified roles and leadership opportunities provided for the students, a performance at a school assembly or outside of the school on a class trip might emerge. She said that the students may build a stronger group identity and also a stronger individual identity with an increased sense of belonging to the group. Somewhere between physiology in the work of Vickhoff et. al (2013) and community building model introduced by Criss (2010), rests a sense of belonging for the students through music participation that is vital for people of all ages. I continue to wonder if musically-trained or experienced teachers are purposefully or sub-consciously creating these emotional community models in their classrooms.

Mantie (2012) explored the structure of community bands in Ontario, Canada, including the makeup of nine different ensembles. Mantie concluded that the preparation for music in school did not set them up for success for community band participation. Mantie also suggests that participants in the band who enjoyed excelling at playing as an adult were not prepared only in classroom learning. Mantie discusses at length the enjoyment factor and how a community band can improve the quality of life for members, particularly single adult members of the band. Mantie also suggests connecting the school music programs to the identified success stories in music education, as to increase lifelong music performance and participation. Flowers (2001) continues the conversation, also reflecting on success stories in music.

Flowers (2001) found, that in her study with senior citizens and their music

experiences, seniors tend to have more of an inclination to participate in music activities later in life if they had been exposed to music through school. Flowers found that many of the seniors wish they would have learned to play the piano at a young age. Participants in Flowers' study claimed that piano could serve several functions, both in social situations or in a private home, as they think back to life experiences. Many of the seniors in Flowers' study had the opinion that students should be able to learn to play an instrument in school, despite social or economic class. In flowers' work, seniors claimed that the lasting impact is worth the time and energy a teacher may have to instill with a student.

Shansky (2010) is also collecting information like Flowers (2001) about the nature of community ensembles. Shansky's study looks into community orchestras, and specifically a 70 year old community orchestra out of New Jersey. Shansky highlighted the themes of her findings with her qualitative studies, being the desire for music learning of participants and frustrations that arise during participation in the community orchestra. Shansky reports that many of the participants shared positive emotions about being a part of their music ensembles. Shansky was surprised to find that social time during the rehearsals did not take away from rehearsal time. Shanksy also reported the high importance of quality musicianship to the group for ensemble success.

\*\*\*

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

Through this work, I attempted to answer how teachers inspire lifelong musicianship. Through the lens of adult musicians, performing in ensembles as a hobby, I hope to have shared the personal stories of teachers who are still performing or participating in music as adults. Through their stories, I hoped to learn who or what keeps many of these musicians in the hobby long after they finished school. Stories of educators who have been even lightly involved in music groups as adults may also be included. How do teachers bring various forms of music into their practice when they have a personal avocation in music?

#### **Research Plan and Rationale**

Qualitative data was collected in 3 forms. The three forms of data collection: 5 interview prompts, a classroom visit note taking form, and a prompt for a written response can be found in the appendix.

First, participants were interviewed using the included interview script. Questions were written in an open-ended format, as to allow the study participants to share personal

stories and experiences. This study has been designed to capture stories and experiences of teaching musicians. The open ended questions connected participants to their lives as experienced through music. The questions allowed for an unveiling of music experiences and how it might have impacted adult life, participation in music, and teaching. During the interview, it was considered that the researcher may move away from the script as responses of participants were given.

Next, a classroom observation of the participating musicians took place. Participants were asked to identify a time in the day when they planned to incorporate music into their lessons, in any capacity. It was understood that this may have changed the nature or outcome of the lesson. Participants were observed for one teaching block, equivalent to 45 minutes (as this was the length of my preparation block, when when observations were completed). It was hopeful to draw connections from observations to interview responses, connecting back to the initial burning question, wondering if teaching had been impacted by lifelong musicianship.

Lastly, each participant was given an opportunity to respond in writing to written prompts. The prompts were similar to the initial interview questions, though have been changed slightly. The purpose of the written response was to allow some thought to be placed in the responses. Participants were given time to think through the questions, so it was hopeful that an extra layer of depth could have occurred in the responses. These responses were then compiled with the interview and observation responses for each of the participants, providing reasoning and examples as to the level of perceived impact of teacher musicianship in the classroom.

As a whole, the teaching community will benefit from the results of this work. Also, some interested families may benefit as well, as students who have an interest in music may need reasoning for family members. Teaching is not practiced in seclusion, without influence from outside fields, interests, or passions of the teacher. A teacher's personality resonates into the classroom and students may grow from a shared interest or exposure to an interest area of the teacher.

In the case of musical passion and participation, teachers have great potential to influence students with musical abilities. Students simply hearing about a teacher practicing a passion outside of school may spark a student to explore his or her interest. These interests may not be music-related, or even related to any other passions radiated by the teacher. An educator glowing with excitement may very well inspire a student to be bold, unique, and explore something he/she also loves.

### **Setting and Participants**

Self-identified adult musicians participated in this work. Participants were musicians as well as teachers in the international school community. I drew my pool of participants from my teaching community in Shanghai, as I wanted to include an observation component in this study. The musicians must have somehow concurrently participated, or have recently participated in a music group ("recent" is at the discretion of each participant). Musicians may or may not have been paid for their participation in the ensembles, and some may even have paid money to participate. Music ensembles may have included jazz or rock bands, concert bands, choirs, or orchestras. Some

musicians may have played in multiple groups and may even perform occasionally on their own.

In the case of a face-to-face interview, the participant and I met in their classrooms or a setting of the participant's choice, as our schedules allowed (as we are teaching full-time). Interview participants may have also chose to meet in another location, such as a coffee shop or restaurant, which may remain open to each participant. Participants maintained some choice over the matter, as they may have felt more comfortable and open to discussion in a different venue than their classrooms.

The observations took take place in each participant's classroom, or potentially another environment in the school. Ideally, some sort of music was hoped to have been involved in the observation. It was possible that a set observation time did not allow for music, as lessons may change from the original plan, depending on the needs of students.

The final component, the written response, was to be completed at the discretion of each participant. I, the researcher, handed the prompts to the participant, with attached space for writing. The prompts were not given as questions, but as ideas for reflection ideas. This was done so participants have a bit of freedom in reflecting on their music experiences in school. The prompts were to be given at the completion of the observation and be requested to be returned within 4 school days, as the nature of this experience is brief.

## **Research Instruments**

Participants were prompted to disclose personal experiences pertaining to their own educational experiences and music experiences. The participants are able to disclose as much or as little information as they would like, as all prompts are open-ended. Study participants will be told to keep student names and school names private, as to not disclose private information.

Documents were not labeled with participant names. Participants were asked to not include school names, but were asked to disclose the country and city of the educational institution with which they were affiliated. Participants may have chosen to include information about students at their own free will. Any private information disclosed about students was to be destroyed at the completion of the study. However, participants were asked to refrain from using student names or school names. Audio recordings had the potential to be included in this study. In audio recordings, participants were asked to disclose the name of the city and country of residence (past and present), but again reminded to keep specific names of schools and students out of their responses.

## **Data Analysis Techniques**

The first form of data collection, the in-person interview, was to remain open as not to influence the participants responses. As the research was being completed in Shanghai, away from most community music organizations, it was originally planned that phone interviews would take place across the ocean. Creswell (2014) discussed limitations and benefits of phone interviews, highlighting the benefits of using a phone

interview when in-person interviews are not possible. Since I planned for the research to occur in Shanghai, I decided to complete my research with community musicians here in Shanghai instead of completing an overseas phone interview. Creswell also explained that the researcher can gather information from historic events when gathering data from an interview.

One of the key pieces of data collection in this research was the classroom observation. Frost (2011) discussed ethnographic research in her work around psychological field research. She explained participant observation, highlighting that the researcher may choose how they want to spend his or her time, depending upon the interest of the study. She mentioned that researcher involvement in games or activities can have a positive or negative effect on the outcome of the research, so warned to proceed with caution. During the observation process, she talked about the many ways to take notes, but explained that there is not right or wrong way to take field notes. It was advised to also make mental notes, following with a written reflection of memories the next day. As this work ultimately became a collection of stories from educators, the observation of the teacher had been chosen as one of the research methods. It was chosen because it gave the project clarity, as some participants were not official music teachers, but rather teachers who love and use music. I wondered if the teachers might do something special in the classroom, inspiring students through music. While I did not document the students, I was careful to watch the teacher's behavior and practice, in terms of musicianship.

A simple recording sheet was to be used during the observations. Creswell (2014)



suggested using a simple piece of paper with a line down the center. On the left side of paper, he suggested adding “descriptive notes.” On the right side of the paper, he suggested adding “reflective notes.” This allowed for biased and unbiased observations. A separate, but identical recording tool was to be used for each of the classroom observations.

Also in the work of Frost (2011), formal and informal interviews were discussed. She recommended compiling open, thoughtful questions while preparing for the formal interview. The open questions allowed for participants to think back to their experiences and take the story in their own direction. She suggested paying attention to pauses, leading words or the way something might be said, as one might infer meaning from these small clues. Frost also discussed informal interviews, but warns that these may catch you by surprise. She warned to ask questions that help an interviewee explain a situation, instead of giving an opinion on a situation or action. The same teachers who were selected to be observed were to be interviewed in more of a formal interview style. It was possible that informal conversations might have occurred along the way as well, bringing in an informal technique. Interviews had been chosen as a technique because there is a need for teachers to explain their background in music. The classroom observation have moved forward with little meaning if left without the background experiences.

Simon (2011) referred to a number of qualitative research analysis processes. She suggested coding each participant with a letter and number, in order to ensure confidentiality and to keep organized. This study was designed follow her advice and

label each of the participant teachers as T1, T2, T3 and so forth, as participants volunteered to be a part of the study. I fully intended to maintain teacher confidentiality throughout the study, and coding each participant allowed responses to be connected (written, interview, and observational responses). Simon, in her study, also referred to the common practice of finding a theme in a qualitative study. If a common idea or theme occurred throughout the process, it might be worth mentioning in the final results or interpretation. Lastly, it was recommended that the researcher seeks out participants until the themes begin to repeat themselves. This particular study may have been limited because of the small number of possible musician teachers in the participating school.

Each participant's interview was to be summarized to include key points, as identified by the conductor of the research. Once each experience had been summarized by the researcher, themes were to be highlighted, labeled and summarized in chapter four.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Research**

#### **Overview**

This chapter includes six case studies, in response to the burning question of this study, asking how teachers bring various forms of music into their practice when they have a personal avocation in music. Each teacher was labeled T1 to T6 in this study, as to be confidentially documented and tracked through the study.

#### **Description of Data Collection Procedure**

Data for this work was collected over the course of one week in late November, 2015. Participants were asked to first sign the disclosure agreement, acknowledging that they are aware of the parameters of the study. They were also given a brief description of the study. All participants were enthusiastic about helping with the study and did not ask any further questions. Many of the participants were excited to share their music story and were very willing to sit down and discuss their music history and teaching practice. Participant T3 even described the interview process as “therapeutic.”

The first method of data collection included interviews with each participant. Each volunteer was asked to choose a location to meet, as to allow for maximum comfort of the study participants. I remained flexible in where and when I met with each teacher

being interviewed. Participant T6 invited me to meet for lunch at a local Vietnamese restaurant. Participant T2 invited me to join him at a local coffee shop. Participant T5 invited me to join her at a restaurant for brunch. Participants T1, T3, and T4 invited me to their homes to have a casual conversation. Participants T1 and T4 chose to conduct the interview portion together, as they are engaged and went to school together, though they each answered the questions separately.

The second method of data collection was a classroom observation. Each participant was asked when the best time to observe might be, and was able to choose a time of day that worked best for both the teacher and researcher. The participants knew that this research was seeking observations regarding music, so many of the classroom observations were based on times when music was prevalent in their teaching practice.

During the interview process, each participant was sent an email, with the five written response questions and was asked to return the responses within three days. Three of the six participants completed the written interview responses. The remaining people reported that the similar nature of the interview questions made the written component redundant and that they were able to share everything in the face-to-face interview portion of the study. If this study were to be completed again, the written portion might include follow-up questions, as many participants reported that the spoken portion was quite enough for respondents to share their stories.

### **Data Collected**

During the interview portion of the study, detailed notes were taken of each of the six participant responses. In the following section, each participants' responses will be

paraphrased and highlighted. In addition, I have included data from both the optional written response as well as classroom observation. Participants reported that the most depth came from interviews, though connections to observations and follow-up written notes are also included in this section.

As the study moved forward, the participant written interview became redundant and was made optional as part of the study. Three out of the six participants chose to respond to the writing prompt option, mostly reiterating themes spoken in their face-to-face interview. Though a phone interview was also presented as an option, each participant chose to meet in person, at a place of their own choice.

### **Participant T1**

**T1's Interview and Email Responses** Participant T1 was raised in a household with two teachers as parents. As a student in rural Iowa, she stated that she always enjoyed helping and being in charge of music settings. She claimed that these leadership experiences in the music world lead her to music teaching. When asked if she ever considered doing anything else, she might consider the technology field, but never pursued any other career options outside of music education. Currently, she teaches second to fifth grade general music in Shanghai, China, though also has a background in middle and high school band conducting in Iowa. She writes:

For me being a music teacher was something I grew up with since my dad was middle school band teacher. We always had music happening in our house, taking piano lessons, starting a new instrument or listening to music together. When I was older, I

knew that music was something that made me happy and that I was good at so I wanted to share that with others!

Piano lessons began at the age of four for T1, as she followed in the musical footsteps of her older brothers. Her dad, she reported, tried to start family bands while she was growing up, and still makes unsuccessful attempts to this day. She regrets not continuing with the cello, as she used to play both cello and bassoon in school ensembles. Today, she continues self-study on the bassoon. She very much valued the music community and circle of friends that she made in her high school and university ensembles.

T1 found it difficult to keep her ensemble and performance practice in action, reporting to understand the break that music teachers need outside of the school day music teaching. Occasionally, she found time to play at her hometown church in Iowa or play in local ensembles. She stated that as a bassoon player, the demand is low for community participation.

In her classroom, her music background came into play in a number of ways. She found that she is able to present information in a large variety of ways. She spoke of being able to rap through new information and clap patterns easily. Most presentation skills came back, connecting to her music experience and training. She stated that music is a lifelong activity, unlike any sport or task you can learn in school. She remembered hearing about people in their 80s and 90s still participating in music ensembles, contrasting this experience to athletes who are not able to necessarily continue a sport late in life. She wrote:

Music is a life long activity. You won't see people playing football when they're 99 but music yes. Music brings people together and that's what is special about being in a musical family or class. We all but aside our egos and differences to create something beautiful that people from any background our country and experience.

**T1 and T2's Observation Notes** I was invited into a music classroom to observe both T1 and T2 in action. They invited me in as they were co-teaching and felt that the two-person observation might be beneficial. The fourth grade students were preparing for their upcoming winter concert, incorporating dance and live music into one show. It is noted that I was invited to participate in this classroom as part of the show due to my observation.

Both T1 and T2, as elementary music teachers, led the classes in the dress rehearsal for the winter show. The teachers projected lyrics on the board in the front of the room and placed the students on the risers in the large classroom. All music and dance had a winter theme, and the teachers directed all students in singing and dancing, remaining fully active throughout the process. The teachers both used large gross-motor movement to demonstrate the dances and seemed to be in perfect sync with one another as they moved with the classes. Both teachers sang just as loudly, if not louder than the students. The teachers seemed confident and did not show any sign of visible anxiety as they sang in front of the classes.

## **Participant T2**

**T2's Interview and Email Responses** Participant T2 began to study clarinet back when he was in fifth grade. He grew up in a family of music lovers, and spent a lot

of time in his childhood listening to hymns and organ music. As a child, he took piano lessons but claimed to have hated sitting with his teacher in piano, often going completely silent and refusing to play. Later on, he began to take voice lessons with the very same teacher and became very interested in music. His teacher was quite inspirational to him, pushing him in his music theory knowledge, which he claims often does not get taught until college level theory classes. His clarinet study became his music focus and his band director was present in his music life from fifth to twelfth grade as his main music teacher.

When participant T2 went off to his university study, he began to take the clarinet quite seriously. He described his clarinet teacher as being “high powered” and being an incredible musician, often blowing him away with his musicianship. He stated that this level of musicianship inspired him to want to reach the professional level of clarinet playing. He continued through college and graduate school, studying clarinet on a scholarship. He wrote:

Then, when college came, I just figured I’m into music so I should do something that has to do with music—why not be a music teacher?! I guess that’s pretty haphazard, but it seemed more reliable than trying to audition for the New York Philharmonic.

T2 also spoke of his university professors with high regard:

I think they understood the musical struggles that I had to go through to get there.

This is why I had to include those clarinet teachers from my college and graduate school in my list of most influential teachers—because they practiced with **tenacity**.

Everyday they were preparing for some performance like it was the most important



performance of their career and then when they played (even if it was just for me in their studio) it sounded like it was their most important performance.

After completing undergraduate and graduate studies on clarinet, participant T2 tried to find a band directing position, but decided to play professionally in a number of regional ensembles, just to help pay his bills. For a short time, he taught university level clarinet. Eventually, he secured a position as a band director at an Arizona high school and later as a middle school band director in the same district. Years later, he moved to Shanghai, China with his wife and became an elementary music teacher. He claims to miss teaching middle and high school band.

Today, T2 reported that he does not often play his clarinet. From time to time, he shared that he plays in small shows in Shanghai, and occasionally sings with a community choir of expatriate musicians, singing the Messiah for an annual concert. He emphasized that teaching music is not “doing music.” He claimed that teaching music can be very different than going through a music program as a student. He stated that many people do not realize this difference in a musician’s experience. He claimed that many of his university music courses had little to nothing to do with training him to be a music teacher. His program trained T2 to be a musician.

### **Participant T3**

#### **T3’s Interview and Email Responses**

Participant T3 began studying management information systems when he was in school, changing to become a physical education student later in his college career. He wrote:

I really don't know what made me become a teacher. I went to college to study management information systems, because that was what my dad told me I was going to study. But after one semester of it, I had had enough. I always liked sports, and I was playing college, so I became a PE [physical education] major. My parents thought I was going to go into music, but I didn't want music to be something that I took very seriously. It was a passion of mine, but not something I wanted to devote my full time to it. It was more like an escape.

Born in Sri Lanka and being raised a Seventh Day Adventist, his parents only approved of very particular types of music. According to the interview subject, music with a beat was considered the "devil's music." Most music outside of piano, classic vocal, or violin was banned from his household. While speaking about his experiences early in life involving music, he recalled being strongly influenced by his parents, being forced to learn an instrument. He described his childhood as if he were in a constant battle with his parents, sometimes hiding his secret participation in ensembles or music opportunities, as they would be seen as sinful. T3 regretted not rebelling against his parents when they told him that he was not allowed to perform on a Friday night in a leading high school musical role, as it would be seen as breaking the Sabbath. From time to time, he reported, it was necessary to make up small lies about what he was doing, so he could continue participating as a musician.

Throughout school, participant T3 learned to play violin, sang in school choirs, played the drums (without parental permission), learned the trumpet, mellophone (a marching band friendly version of the French horn), and also sang in his church choir. T3

recalled:

I have fond memories of music all the way back to Kindergarten. I remember acting on stage when I was four years-old, performing Gilbert and Sullivan in high school, performing in churches, choir tours, singing in rock bands, directing a gospel choir (and karaoke). All great memories. I think no matter how I'm involved in music, minus the 11 years of violin lessons, I always have great memories.

After school, he continued to become a P.E. teacher, and eventually a teacher to non-native English speakers, in the U.S., Canada, and for thirteen years in Brazil at an international school. While working in Brazil, he was quite involved in as a vocal coach, helping to cast and coach school music productions. He was also active in faculty bands as well as his own private music endeavors outside of school.

**T3's Observation Notes** Participant T3 began his 7th grade English class with a writing prompt on the board. He explained the emotion-based writing prompt as he directed students to take out their laptops. Students were asked to work quietly at their seats for the duration of two songs, one by Taylor Swift and another by Bon Jovi. He expected students to type the entire time the music played, even if they write that they are out of ideas.

As he brought the class back together after the songs ended, he circulated around the room, asking students to share. From time to time, he sat casually in a chair in the front of the room, bringing himself to the level of the students. He taught with a cup of coffee in his hand, and did not expect students to raise their hands when speaking. T3 stopped by my observation area to explain that he was about to turn up the music, as

some of his students are very soft spoken. He explained that he turns up the ambient music (instrumental) in his classroom during discussion, forcing the quiet students to speak more loudly. During the class discussion, he adjusted the music several times.

#### **Participant T4**

**T4's Interview and Emailed Responses** Participant T4, a fellow trombone player, grew up in a music-centered home in Iowa. His dad was a band director and mother also a teacher. Watching his parents teach, particularly his dad, led T4 to his own music teaching career. His father forced him to play a band instrument from fifth grade until he was in high school, but T4 stated that neither he nor his brother (also in band) would have quit, even if they had a choice. T4 became a teacher in Shanghai, China at an international baccalaureate school. He teaches middle and high school band. T4 claimed that it was not until high school that he began to form his band community, as many of his close relationships formed when he was surrounded by the other intense band students.

T4 decided early on to become a music teacher; he said that teaching music just made sense. He spoke of never even considering another career path until he began teaching, when he seriously considered becoming a police officer, and joked about becoming a wind turbine technician (a native Iowan, where there are many large wind turbines).

Participant T4 found music outlets outside of the teaching day since graduating from college. While beginning his teaching career in rural Iowa, he found time to drive to his college town to play trombone duets with another man he knew from college. With

time, he described moving out of his “small town slump” and found a trombone quartet and community jazz band. While teaching in Shanghai, he has participated in a community jazz ensemble and reported singing occasionally in a community choir singing the Messiah just before Christmas each year.

Before concluding the interview, T4 described his passion for creating the music classroom. He recalled his own band experiences, speaking of a community feeling. He described striving to make the band community the most important aspect of his own band classroom, because of his experiences in band growing up. He spoke about this band community experience from his past and this being the reason he teaches music today. The community, he stated, is the most important part of his classroom.

**T4’s Observation Notes** As I entered the classroom, the 9th and 10th grade band was rehearsing for an upcoming high school music concert. T4 was conducting an arrangement of a song called Greensleeves with the ensemble. I noticed a rehearsal agenda written on the board, and particularly noticed the detail of the schedule, down to the minute. He had a sense of urgency on his face with an equally driven sound in his voice. While conducting, he often stepped off the conductor’s podium to interact with students.

During rehearsal, T4 organized students to help manage percussion and sound equipment. Halfway through the observation, the students moved from the band rehearsal space into the adjacent auditorium. A guitar ensemble was set up on stage, also preparing for the same concert. T4 did not spend time managing students, but continued preparing equipment. Once he instructed students to take the stage, he cued a student to begin

reading the introduction speech, as if the band were beginning their performance. He cued a downbeat and left the stage, listening to the band from the audience. His sense of urgency and importance continued as the band finished their rehearsal, preparing three pieces of music for their concert.

## **Participant T5**

### **T5's Interview and Email Responses**

Participant T5 began her music experience as a young child. She reported that her parents remember her to be singing more than her siblings at the age of three. She mentioned that she is the only musical member of her family, so her parents often did not know how to help her succeed in her musical endeavors, which she says, were of high importance to her. Growing up, she always sang at her Catholic church and always sang in choirs at schools. She reported that she always had to find the audition and participation requirements herself, as her parents though supportive, did not know how to help her find music resources, such as productions, auditions, or voice lessons.

While in college, she noted that her college choir director had an extremely positive impact on her. While she reported that her family and friends often told her that she had a nice voice, there was something different about a well-accomplished musician and teacher, telling her that she had a real talent.

When she began her university study, T5 began as a music therapy student, often working with young children with disabilities. After a semester overseas in Ireland, she was exposed to a variety of courses outside of music therapy for the first time. She quickly realized that she loved working with the kids, but really wanted to explore

classroom teaching with young students. Her music therapy major shifted to a music minor, and she rushed to finish her degree in early childhood education.

Notably, T5 emphasized how music impacted her classroom. As she described teaching three year old students in an international school, only one out of eighteen students spoke fluent English. She systematically trained her class to act in a certain way after she sings particular prompts. She stated that she uses clap sequences for cleaning up the classroom, sings repeating sentences in read-aloud books, has songs designated for transitions, and music to keep the kids following her down the hall through the school. She claimed that instead of trying to give her students directions that they will not understand, she sang so the students might learn language a bit more quickly and follow directions based on their routine.

In the conclusion of her interview, T5 stated that ultimately, after a lifetime of music making, she is happy that she is able to work with children and make music in her classroom every day. She wishes that more people could confidently utilize music in their teaching practices, as she sees great benefit.

**T5's Observation Notes** While visiting T3's preschool classroom consisting of three year old students, I was invited to bring my trombone. The students were studying music in their current unit. From the time I entered the classroom, soft music was playing in the background. As class progressed, T5 changed the music to the soundtrack from Elf, the movie. Students entered the room, following their regimented routine of unpacking their backpacks, saying good morning to the teacher and two assistants, and had freedom to play around the room. As some students brought

instruments from home, T5 asked the name of the instrument and praised them for bringing an artifact from home.

When the teacher brought the students to the carpet, she clapped a rhythm several times. Within 30 seconds, all of the students cleaned up any toys or instruments and joined the teacher on the carpet. While the students were moving quickly to clean up, the teacher sang “clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere” several times, in a well-trained singing voice. The teacher reported that of her 18 students, one speaks English at home. She stated that most of her students do not understand English. Singing is her way of helping the students understand what is happening in the classroom, as they will recognize the songs she sings and will know what to do. If she speaks, the students may not understand. During whole group time, students were handed a personal jingle bell and all of the students joined in singing Jingle Bells.

As I was asked to bring my trombone to the classroom, the teacher allowed the students to sing Jingle Bells along with the trombone and were allowed to gently touch the trombone at the end of my observation.

### **T6's Responses**

**T6's Interview and Email Responses** Participant T6 began his conversation around his teaching career, explaining how he studied art. He was lead to teaching by following his fiancée to Georgia from Mississippi. After a number of dead-end jobs, he began working with students with orthopedic impairments in the classroom. He found this work extremely rewarding, and combined his art background with his new-found passion in the classroom and followed a non-traditional route to teacher



certification through the state of Georgia. The program allowed him to work full-time in a school while completing observations toward teaching certification. T6 continued working in public schools in Athens, Georgia until moving to Shanghai in the summer of 2015.

From 1997 until 2003, T6 began his music career by participating in a rock band, playing both local distant bars and shows. He had little formal music training before joining his band and teaching himself to play bass guitar. Since 1997, he has been involved in some sort of band, though in recent years, his music involvement has taken a shift to Christian worship music. His dad was supportive of his endeavors in music and bought him his first bass guitar and amp.

T6 reported not appreciating any formal music training that he received through school. He reported that he did not enjoy music classes or formal music lessons in school, but enjoyed his self-started bands and music performances opportunities, usually on self-taught instruments.

**T6's Observation Notes** Participant T6 invited me to his after-school action figure making club. Students from second to fifth grade were invited to participate in the action figure club, making action figures out of professional modeling clay. The environment seemed especially relaxed, with modern instrumental music playing in the background at voice level. T6 responded in a very calm way to a student making a mess out of his uniform shirt “look man, why do you have paint all over your shirt?” He was extremely soft-spoken with the students and students are comfortable to move around the room while working.

## Interpretation of Data

This study asks how teachers have brought various forms of music into their practice when they have a personal avocation in music. Based on observations, interviews, and emailed interview responses, each of the six research participants had these five themes in common:

- All participants play recordings or live music in their classrooms.
- An influential adult motivated each teacher, as a child, to learn or maintain instrument
- Each participant was impacted by parental influence, some positively and some negatively

Each theme is at the interpretation of the researcher, but is informed and guided by the pieces of research in the literature review.

## Connection of Themes to Literature

Thinking back to the literature review, past research connected to this study was divided into three sections. First, I discussed music as an avocation for teachers. Second, I discussed the impact music has on classroom instruction. Last, I explored music as community. The following three themes drawn from observations can be connected to the three components from the literature review. Below, a table connects each literature review sub-heading to a theme.

Literature Review Heading	Theme(s)
Music as a Teacher Avocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An influential adult motivated each teacher, as a child, to learn or maintain their instruments.</li> </ul>

Music in the Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All participants play recordings or live music in their classrooms.</li> </ul>
Music as Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each participant was impacted by parental influence, some positively and some negatively</li> </ul>

**Music as a Teacher Avocation** Through the interview process, each participant documented at least one way that an adult inspired him or her while growing up. Sometimes, this was a music teacher as in the case of participant T5, who referred to her college vocal professor as a strong influence. At other times, this strong influence was a close friend or fellow musician, as in the case of participant T6, who referred to several band members with whom he had made music. As in the case of participant T4, his father was his band director, who later inspired him to become a band director. I suggest that no matter your role as a musician, if you are working with children, it is possible that your participation in music might inspire a student, just by being visible to the students in a musical way. Werner (2002) suggests that any passion can be brought into the classroom, positively impacting students.

**Music in the Classroom** Though in a variety of ways, all participants played recordings or live music in their classrooms. Participants T1, T2, T4, and T5 brought live music into their classrooms during the observation session, with student age ranging from three years old to sixteen years old. Participants T1, T2, T3, T5, and T6 all had some element of recording music in the classroom, either to play to set the mood for work time,

or to play as backup for student singing. Shih, Huang, and Chiang (2012) said that this ambient music in the work environment can increase productivity, thus learning in the classroom setting. For the students who are participating in a live ensemble, Catterall, Chapleau, and Iwanaga (1999) said that this has a positive academic outcome for students, particularly those with low socioeconomic status (which may not pertain to our private school setting).

### **Music as Community**

Each participant was impacted by parental influence, some positively and some negatively in this study. Teachers at our school have an opportunity to have a similar positive musical role model in our community. Parents of lifelong musicians in this study mostly had a self-reported positive impact, as in the case of T1, T2 (mostly, through exposure of church music), T4, and T6. Participant T3 was forced to play limited instruments, per some were seen as the devil's music, though still had exposure to the arts. Participant T5 was supported, though her parents did not know best ways to help her continue her music career or study. Vickhoff, Malmgren, Nyberg, Ekström, Engwall, and Jörnsten (2013) spoke of the sense of belonging that participation in a music ensemble can bring. Vickhoff et. al asserted that participation in these ensembles, as a trained musician, fulfills our need for belonging and community. Students in schools need this sense of community, I believe, to be successful academically. With a variety of musicians as teachers in the school, we have an opportunity to provide training through a number of music paths.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Conclusion**

#### **Implications and Limitations**

This study is quite limited, as it only captures a small sample of stories from six educators, all from the same school. Due to the nature of data collection methods, including observations and interviews, it seemed to make more sense to limit observations to one school and campus. Since I was conducting my observations during the school day during prep periods, usually only lasting 45 minutes, travel opportunities were limited. This did limit stories to teachers coming from one school culture. However, I was able to go deeper with each research participant, as I spoke with and observed the participants on several levels. Triangulation of data, as it is collected in three diverse manners, took place throughout the study as suggested by Creswell (2014). Unfortunately, the written component of the study did not go quite as planned, as only three of six participants completed the written component.

The short timeframe of data collection (less than one week) was also limiting for this study. If additional time could be added to this work, more classroom observations could take place, perhaps even watching the same teacher on multiple occasions. This

could add depth to each teacher's music story. A teacher might even invite the researcher into the classroom for a special music-related activity or task.

### **Future Projects**

In the future, it is recommended to continue this conversation surrounding teachers, avocations, and the result for the classroom, school culture, and students. Due to time limitations, only minimal teachers were asked to participate in the study, sampling a small amount of educators' music stories.

One possible future research scenario might include a broader sample, looking into many types of teacher avocations. For example, one might ask teachers about a hobby or special project they participate in outside of school. Then, ask how long they have been participating in this hobby or project, and last interview students and teachers, asking about the implications for the classroom environment and experience. This study did not include the student perspective, as to keep the process simple. In the future, a student perspective may add a new level of depth to the teacher avocation story.

### **Growth of the Author**

When I began this project three years ago, I was a brand new teacher, just beginning my teaching journey. While I still am fairly fresh in the eyes of veteran teachers, I am starting to understand the cycle of a teacher's year, even helping new teachers to understand our complex International Baccalaureate Program of Inquiry. What were once dreams of educational theory have become my practice, which has shifted slightly from year to year. Having the strong inquiry and constructivist background

knowledge from Hamline, I have been able to put my inquiry theory into practice these past few years in an inquiry based, International Baccalaureate environment. The international schools encourage inquiry and creative teaching.

In the beginning of this project, I set out to build a document to enhance music experiences in the school. After meeting with other teachers, I learned that this was not as feasible or practical as I once thought. Teachers seemed to have a knowledge base or comfort level with music and without coaching, may not drive their practice in a musical direction.

In the end, a gathering of musician teachers' stories seemed to make the most sense. I was excited and engaged in putting together this project, especially toward the final few months. Talking with musicians about something so near and dear to their hearts, as their music journeys, is a special conversation. The glow on a musician's face when he/she talks about his/her favorite music teacher or mentor rekindled many of my own memories, early in my music experience. I hope that this can do the same thing for anyone kind enough to read this work.

I plan to make this research available for the faculty at my school as well as former colleagues and music friends. My hope is that it encourages schools to think about the arts in their environments. Also, I hope that educators think about how they bring their personalities and personal passions into the classrooms. I want to feel the change that I could potentially make on our classroom now and share this with other teachers in my school and in the field. Based on the stories of these educators and work on lifelong musicianship as in Flowers and Murphy's (2001) work on the perspective of music in late

adulthood, I don't believe that teachers work in a land of isolation. Students get to know their teachers as role models and mentors.

In closing, I urge teachers to continue studying their passions. We, as teachers are learners. We are also lucky, as teacher musicians to expose our students to a higher level of musicianship for the purposes of showing our students our hobbies and avocations, improving learning opportunities and maximizing the learning environment, and creating a sense of community in our classroom. We owe it to our students to bring our full selves into the classroom. If the full you is a trombone playing, singing, ukulele playing fourth grade teacher, I say bring your whole self to class!



## **APPENDIX**

### **Data Collection Tool #1**

#### **Interview Questions**

\*These may organically lead to clarifying questions as participants respond.

- i. Talk about your career as a teacher.
- ii. Discuss your involvement with music as a student.
- iii. Tell me about any people or moments of influence in your music experience.
- iv. How do you participate in music ensembles as an adult? How long have you been a participant?
- v. Does music impact your classroom as a teacher in any way? If so, explain.

Adapted from Creswell (2014)

### **Data Collection Tool #3**

#### **Prompts for Written Response**

- i. Write about your journey to becoming a teacher.
- ii. What music experiences stand out to you from your childhood and why were they impactful for you?
- iii. Who inspired you to be involved with music? Explain.
- iv. What memories do you have from school of music?
- v. Write about your classroom. Is music a part of your teaching practice? If so, explain.

Wednesday, November 4th, 2015

Dear Study Participant,

My name is Austin Wellman and I am a graduate student at Hamline University, completing my Master of Arts in Teaching out of St. Paul, Minnesota. This research is public scholarship when complete. The abstract and final paper will be cataloged in Hamline's **Bush Library Digital Commons**, a searchable electronic repository and that it may be published or used in other ways.

This research will capture stories of educators who self-identify as musicians. In the end, participants will help create a narrative of the relationship between teachers and their music avocations outside of school. Participants will be asked to work with the study in 3 ways.

- First, an in-person or telephone interview will be completed.
- Second, if participants are in Shanghai, they will be asked to invited me in to watch a part of a lesson, at which point I will take observational notes.
- Lastly, participants will be asked to complete a written narrative, reflecting on their experiences in music.

Keep in mind that this project is fluid and changing, and that the focus may change as research is completed. The possibility of risks/discomfort is minimal and at any time, you may choose to remove yourself from participating in the study without any consequences. Please be aware that you will be observed and interviewed, which will be confidentially documented.

To protect you, the schools, the other teachers, and the students, all school names will remain confidential. If you mention any student names, teacher names or school names by mistake, I will delete or cover that portion of your written response in any included artifacts.

I request your consent to participate in this study. I will be collecting samples of your responses in the mentioned 3 manners. Again, privacy will be maintained throughout the work.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me:

Austin Wellman  
[awellman01@hamline.edu](mailto:awellman01@hamline.edu)  
+86 185-1673-5139  
Shanghai Community International School  
Changning District  
Shanghai, China 200051



Shanghai Community International School  
上海长宁国际学校

October 19, 2015

Dear Hamline University Human Subjects Committee,

Mr. Austin Wellman has permission to confidentially observe and document actions of the teachers at Shanghai Community International School. He has agreed to maintain privacy of the students and teachers while performing his observations. The school understands that teacher behavior may be recorded in his Hamline University Master of Arts in Teaching capstone project. We also understand that this research is public scholarship when complete.

Please feel free to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

Kevin Haggith

Principal

SCIS-HIS Hongqiao Campus - Lower School  
1161 Hongqiao Road, Shanghai, China 200051

Campus Site: <https://hq.scis-his.net>

Phone: 86-21-6261-4338 • Fax: 86-21-6261-4639

Email: [khaggith@scis-his.org](mailto:khaggith@scis-his.org) • Website: [www.scis-his.org](http://www.scis-his.org)

[www.scis-his.org](http://www.scis-his.org)

Hongqiao ECE Campus: 2212 Hongqiao Road, Shanghai 200336 CHINA (Tel) 86-21-6295-1222 (Fax) 86-21-6261-4639

Hongqiao Campus: 1161 Hongqiao Road, Shanghai 200051 CHINA (Tel) 86-21-6261-4338 (Fax) 86-21-6261-4639

Pudong Lower School: 800 Xiuyan Road, Shanghai 201315 CHINA (Tel) 86-21-5812-9888 (Fax) 86-21-5812-9000

Pudong Upper School: 198 Hengqiao Road, Shanghai 201318 CHINA (Tel) 86-21-5812-9888 (Fax) 86-21-5812-9000

## REFERENCES

- Bahna-James, T. (1991). The relationship between mathematics and music: secondary school student perspectives. *The Journal of Negro Education* , Vol. 60 (No. 3), 477-485.
- Blood, A. J., & Zatorre, R. J. (2001). Intensely pleasurable responses to music correlate with activity in brain regions implicated in reward and emotion. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 98(20), 11818-11823.
- Bresler, L. (1994). Music in a double bind: Instruction by non-specialists in elementary schools. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 95(3), 30.
- Bowles, C. L. (1991). Self-expressed adult music education interests and music experiences. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 39(3), 191-205.
- Bresler, L. (2005). Music and the Intellect: Perspectives, Interpretations, Implications for Education. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 87(1), 24-31. *development: general involvement*
- Catterall, J., Chapleau, R., & Iwanaga, J. (1999). Involvement in the arts and human development: General involvement and intensive involvement in music and theatre arts (Rep.). Retrieved from The Imagination Project at UCLA : [http://www.newschool.ie/\\_fileupload/Image/artsinvolvement.pdf](http://www.newschool.ie/_fileupload/Image/artsinvolvement.pdf)
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Criss, E. (2010). Teamwork in the Music Room. *Music Educators Journal*, 97(1), 30-36.

Cox, E. T., Hively, R., Spickler, P. B., Quate, S., Jones, G., Gensor, L., . . . Connors, B.

(1990). The round table: Carnie, hiker, swimming instructor: English teachers' avocations. *The English Journal*, 79(4), 89-91.

Duax, K. P. (2013). How important is music education? *Journal of Singing*, 69(3), 257+.

Gardner, H. (2006). *Multiple intelligences: New horizons*. New York: BasicBooks.

Fiske, E. B. (E.d.), (1999). *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts. Arts Education Partnership and President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.*

Flowers, P. J., & Murphy, J. W. (2001, Fall-Winter). Talking about music: interviews with older adults about their music education, preferences, activities, and reflections. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 20(1), 26.

Frost, N., & Ebrary, I. (2011). *Qualitative research methods in psychology: Combining core approaches*. Palo Alto, Calif;Maidenhead,: McGraw-Hill.

Furrer, C., & Skinner, E. (2003). Sense of relatedness as a factor in children's academic engagement and performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95, 148-162.

Gardner, H. (1985). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, H. (2003). *Multiple intelligences after twenty years. Presented at American Educational Research Association.*

Hansen, D., & Bernstorf, E. (2002). *Linking music learning to reading instruction. Music Educators Journal*, 88(5), 17-52.

Hetland, L. (December 01, 2000). Listening to Music Enhances Spatial-Temporal Reasoning: Evidence for the "Mozart Effect". *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 34, 4, 105-148.

Jenkins, J. S. (January 01, 2001). The Mozart effect. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 94, 4, 170-2.

Kassell, C. (1998). Music and the Theory of Multiple Intelligences. *Music Educators Journal* Vol. 84, No., pp. 29-32+60.

Kenny, D. T. (2002). The effects of group singing on mood. *Psychology of Music*, 30(2), 175-185.

Knight, E. (1993). Music in winchester, massachusetts: A community portrait, 1830-1925. *American Music*, 11(3), 263-282.

Kuntz, T. L. (2011). High School Students' Participation in Music Activities Beyond the School Day. *UPDATE: Applications Of Research In Music Education*, 30(1), 23-31.

Pytlik, E. C. (1997). Conducting qualitative research in the classroom. *Technology Teacher*, 56(6), 20.

Mantie, R. (2012). A study of community band participants: implications for music education. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, (191), 21+.

Rauscher, F. H., Shaw, G. L., & Ky, K. N. (January 01, 1993). Music and spatial task



performance. (scientific analysis of effect of music on humans.). *Nature*, 365, 6447.)

Rauscher, F. H., Shaw G.L. (1998). Key Components of the Mozart Effect. *Perceptual and motor skills*, 86(3), 835.

Ravaja, N., & Kallinen, K. (2004). Emotional effects of startling background music during reading news reports: The moderating influence of dispositional BIS and BAS sensitivities. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 45(3), 231-238.

Seawright, J., & Gerring, J.. (2008). Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options. *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2), 294–308. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20299733>

Shansky, C. (2010). Adult motivations in community orchestra participation: a pilot case study of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra (New Jersey). *Research and Issues in Music Education* [RIME], 8(1).

Excerpted from Simon, M. K. (2011). Dissertation and scholarly research: Recipes for success (2011 Ed.). Seattle, WA, Dissertation Success, LLC.

Southgate, D. E., & Roscigno, V. J. (2009). The Impact of Music on Childhood and Adolescent Achievement. *Social Science Quarterly* (Blackwell Publishing Limited), 90(1), 4-21.

Vickhoff, B., Malmgren, H., Aström, R., Nyberg, G., Ekström, S., Engwall, M., . . .

Jörnsten, R. (2013). Music structure determines heart rate variability of singers. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 4, 334.

Werner, P. (2002). Teaching and avocations: An idle mind is the devil's workshop

revisited. *The Clearing House*, 75(4), 209-211.

Shih, Y., Huang, R., & Chiang, H. (2012). Background music: Effects on attention

performance. *Work*, 42(4), 1.